United Nations A/AC.109/2002/14

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 May 2002

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Turks and Caicos Islands

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat*

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	General	1–2	3
II.	Constitutional, legal and political issues	3–6	3
III.	Economic conditions	7–29	4
	A. General	7–8	4
	B. Public finance	9–13	4
	C. Financial services	14–17	5
	D. Agriculture, fisheries, construction and manufacturing	18–20	5
	E. Tourism	21–24	6
	F. Infrastructure	25–29	6
IV.	Social conditions	30–49	7
	A. General	30–31	7
	B. Labour	32–36	7
	C. Education	37–40	8
	D. Health	41–43	8
	E. Crime	44–47	9

* The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

02-38247 (E) 310502

F. Environment 48–49 9

V. Relations with international organizations and entities 50–52 9

VI. Future status of the Territory 53–61 10

A. Position of the territorial Government 53 10

B. Position of the administering Power 54–60 10

C. Consideration by the General Assembly 61 11

I. General

1. The Territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands[1] comprises 40 islands and cays, which lie 145 kilometres north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and 925 km south-east of Miami, United States of America. Of these islands, only six are permanently inhabited: Grand Turk, where the capital, Cockburn Town, is located; Salt Cay; South Caicos; Middle Caicos; North Caicos and Providenciales. The total population of the Territory was estimated at 24,000 in 1999, including some 5,000 to 6,000 immigrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Most of the population resides on the two principal islands, Grand Turk, which is the administrative capital, and Providenciales, which is the business centre of the islands. Of the other populated islands, South Caicos has 10.5 per cent of the total population; North Caicos 11.1 per cent; Middle Caicos has 2.3 per cent; and Salt Cay, 1.8 per cent. Most of the people are of African descent, the rest being mixed or of European origin. English is the main language, with some Creole spoken by Haitian immigrants. The religion is Christianity; the Anglican Communion predominates.

2. The Turks and Caicos Islands were discovered by the Spanish in 1512. In 1678, Bermudans established a solar salt industry. The Islands were settled by royalist sympathizers from the United States after the War of Independence; they established cotton plantations, employing slaves. Between 1833 and 1843, slavery was abolished and the plantation owners left the Islands, leaving their former slaves in possession. From 1874 to 1959, the Turks and Caicos Islands were governed by Britain as a dependency of Jamaica. The Islands became a separate colony of the United Kingdom in 1962, under the control of the Bahama Islands, but with Bahamian independence in 1973, the Turks and Caicos were placed under a British Governor at Grand Turk.

II. Constitutional, legal and political issues

3. The Turks and Caicos Islands is a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom with a ministerial system of government. Under the provisions of the 1976 Constitution, amended in 1988, executive power is vested in the Governor, appointed by the Queen. The Constitution provides for an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. The Governor is responsible for foreign affairs, internal security, defence, the appointment of public officers, offshore finance and certain other matters, but is otherwise required to act on the advice of the Executive Council. The Executive Council consists of the Governor, six elected members of the Legislative Council and two official members (Chief Secretary and Attorney General). The Legislative Council consists of 19 members. There are 13 representatives elected by popular vote, 3 appointed by the Governor and 3 ex officio members of the Executive Council.

4. The legal system, based on English Common law, includes a Supreme Court and a Court of Appeal, and has provision for appeal to the Privy Council in London. The Attorney General and Chief Justice are currently United Kingdom technical cooperation officers, as are the Senior Crown Counsel, the Legal Draftsman, the Deputy Commissioner of Police and the Head of the Criminal Investigation Division. The Police Development Project supports the provision of a further two technical cooperation officers: an Assistant Commissioner of Police and a Financial Crimes Investigation Officer.

5. The current Governor, John Kelley, was appointed in 1996. Chief Minister Derek Taylor was sworn to office in 1999. In April 2002, Jim Poston was appointed Governor for a term of office beginning in November 2002.[2]

6. In March 1999, the Government of the United Kingdom issued a White Paper on the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories, entitled "Partnership for progress and prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories" (for the text of the White Paper, see A/AC.109/1999/1, annex; for its key recommendations, see A/AC.109/1999/18, para. 37). The White Paper proposed the extension of British citizenship to the citizens of the Territories. At the same time, it required the Territories to amend their local legislation, in particular on human rights and on the regulation of financial services to meet international standards. The Bill completed a three-step process through the House of Lords in 2001, and completed its third reading in the House of Commons in February 2002. It received Royal Assent on 26 February 2002 and became the British Overseas Territories Act 2002. On 18 March 2002, Baroness Amos stated that the British Government was putting into place arrangements to implement the citizenship provisions, the

commencement date of which would be announced no later than 21 May.[3]

III. Economic conditions

A. General

7. Since the 1980s, the main sectors of the economy have been upmarket tourism and international financial services. Foreign investors, mainly from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, play a significant role in the Islands' economic life. The main areas of private investment are tourism property development, real estate, international finance and fishing, focused on the island of Providenciales.

8. According to the economic review released by Oxford Analytica, an international consulting firm, in February 2002, the economic fundamentals of the Territory are robust. The average gross domestic product (GDP) growth reached approximately 8 per cent per year during the last decade, rising from $69 million in 1990 to $199 million in 1999. Although unemployment never fell bellow 12 per cent, and the growth was unevenly distributed between the constituent islands, the economic well-being of the population was assessed as having improved considerably. The review stated that the sound economic basis had helped to cushion the economy from the consequences of the 11 September attacks on the United States. However, the tourist and the financial sectors of the economy suffered badly. According to the Governor's statement before the Chamber of Commerce in March 2002, the economy was still under strain. The British Government had embarked on a study of the impact of the 11 September attacks on the local economy and where it could provide assistance.[4]

B. Public finance

9. The current budget is usually in substantial deficit, which is covered by funding from the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, the European Union and multilateral agencies. The Government levies no taxes on corporate or personal income, capital gains or inheritance. The largest component of current revenue is customs duty, while company registration fees and tourism levies have produced an increased share in recent years.

10. According to the *Europa Yearbook 2001*, in the financial year ending 31 March 2001, the Government expected a recurrent budgetary deficit of $0.06 million. The Territory received a total $8.2 million in British development assistance. During the second quarter of 2001, the Government collected $45,025,589 in revenues compared to $31,608,188.62 for the same period the previous year.[5]

11. The budget is projected on a biennial basis with the fiscal year beginning in March. For 2000-2001, the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands estimated a total revenue of $67,051,624 and expenditures of $67,111,389. The Government expected to collect 44 per cent of the revenue from duties; 15 per cent from fees and charges; 13 per cent from licences; 1 per cent from rent; 16 per cent from taxes and 11 per cent from other sources. Its recurrent expenditures were projected at 30 per cent for education, health, youth and sports; 11.2 per cent for public works; 13.6 per cent for communications, transport and tourism; 3.3 per cent for natural resources; 6.9 per cent for home affairs; 7.9 per cent for police; 21.1 per cent for the Office of the Chief Minister; 0.5 per cent for the Office of the Governor; 2.3 per cent for the Office of the Chief Secretary; 1.5 per cent for Attorney General's Chambers; 1.2 per cent for the Judiciary and 0.5 per cent for the auditors.

12. The Government's capital budget estimates form the basis of the public sector investment programme, which is financed through the Development Fund. The Fund was established for the purpose of receiving such monies as might be appropriated annually from the Consolidated Fund, together with other monies received from external donors. External donors include the Government of the United Kingdom, whose funds are administered through the Dependent Territories Regional Secretariat ($5.2 million), the European Union ($1.5 million), the Caribbean Development Bank ($100,000), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).[6] The budget figures for 2002 are not available.

13. In February 2002, the Governor stated that the British Government was going to help to stabilize the financial system and to enable "better control" of government finances and accounting through a Caribbean Overseas Territories Government Accounting Regime. He pointed out that that

mechanism would allow the territorial Government to better control the economy, including the expenditures and the revenues. According to the Governor, although all necessary local regulations are in place, the collection of revenue remains a "problem area" and much revenue remains uncollected every year.[7]

C. Financial services

14. Constitutional responsibility for the Turks and Caicos Islands' offshore finance sector rests with the Governor. The United Kingdom Technical Cooperation Programme supports the sector through the provision of the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent of the Financial Services Commission. The regulatory structure set up through the Banking Ordinance of 1979 and the Companies and Insurance Ordinance of 1981 was updated and extended in 1990 and 1992.[8] Among the attractions for offshore companies are the use of the United States dollar as the official currency, the absence of direct taxation, a growing financial infrastructure, fast and straightforward company registration procedures, extensive financial freedom and confidentiality.

15. Offshore finance is the second largest source of external revenue after tourism and the third largest employer in the Territory. It contributes 10 per cent to GDP. The number of major international accounting and financial service companies that operate out of Providenciales is more than 17,000.[9]

16. In June 2000, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a list of 35 countries, including the Territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands, labelled as offshore financial centres, which exercised harmful tax practices. Turks and Caicos have made considerable efforts in the financial services industry to maintain its high reputation. According to the Government Information Services, since the late 1900s, the Territory has introduced legislation to help detect and combat drug trafficking and money-laundering. They included the Control of Drugs (Trafficking) Ordinance (1998); the Proceeds of Crime Ordinance (1998); and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) regulations. In 2001, the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) had granted the Turks and Caicos Islands "qualified jurisdiction" status, allowing Turks and Caicos financial institutions to deal in United States securities and to receive income, including dividends, royalties and gross proceeds from the United States.[10] In March 2002, OECD removed the Turks and Caicos Islands from the list of uncooperative tax jurisdictions.[11]

17. At the same time, press reports pointed out that efforts to improve the Government's control over the financial sector would have to continue. In connection with the Enron Corporation, it became known that about 120 of its affiliated companies were registered in the Turks and Caicos. In March 2002, at the request of the British Foreign Secretary, millions of dollars deposited in the Turks and Caicos Islands by Zimbabwe's recently re-elected president, were frozen.[12] In February 2002, the Governor announced that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would investigate the financial services system in the Territory and warned that in the future the jurisdiction would be "subjected to yet more scrutiny". He said that the local legislation allowed international financial institutions like the IMF "to ensure that it has in place the regulation required to pass whatever the test there might be". He maintained that "painful as it may be" for a relatively small financial service industry, in order to compete with larger countries the Territory would have to comply with the international standards.[13]

D. Agriculture, fisheries, construction and manufacturing

18. Agricultural production is small and concentrated in North Caicos. The sector has begun to grow recently, with more produce available for sale in Providenciales and the establishment of a new farmers' cooperative. Fishing, a traditional activity, is the only significant productive sector and contributes 2-3 per cent to GDP. Conch and lobster are the main catches. About 20 per cent of the working population is involved in agriculture and fishing. The Turks and Caicos Islands is home to the world's only commercial conch farm, raising domestic conch for export. Several fish farms are being developed on an experimental basis to produce tilapia for international markets. The production of high-value, value-added and specialty export products has an important potential for growth and investments in the Territory. Some examples include: fin fish and shrimp farming, tropical fish breeding, hydroponic gardening and ornamental horticulture.[14] The demand for local farm produce exceeds the supply. The Government attempts to attract

investments for the development of agriculture by organizing farming cooperatives in North and Middle Caicos and hydroponic gardens in Providenciales to supply the existing resorts.[15]

19. Apart from the production of handicrafts for the tourism trade, the only manufacturing activity is the semi-processing of imported rice for re-export to the European Union, benefiting from duty preferences under the Lomé Convention. Operations were begun in 1994 but have been reduced since early 1997, when the European Union imposed a restrictive quota on rice imports from African, Caribbean and Pacific countries via the overseas countries and territories regime.[16]

20. An international construction company is based in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Sand and rock are quarried locally for use in construction projects, most significantly for hotels and commercial buildings.[17] The construction and real estate market continues to grow. It includes domestic housing and various upmarket resort and beach properties.

E. Tourism

21. The Turks and Caicos Islands tourism sector continues to record one of the fastest growth rates in the entire Caribbean. A total of 165,192 tourists visited the Territory in 2001, which is an 11 per cent increase over the previous year. Tourists from the United States comprised 124,959 visitors, 15,257 visitors came from Canada, 11,073 came from Europe and 6,916 came from Caribbean countries. Of the total number of tourists, 119,280 stayed in the hotels.

22. The terrorist attacks of 11 September had a limited effect on the tourist industry. The hotels in the Territory reported a fall in business in the last quarter of 2001, which had a further damaging effect on associated economic activities. Nevertheless, the Turks and Caicos Islands were the only Caribbean tourist destination where the total number of visitors was higher in 2001 compared with 2000. According to Oxford Analytica, one of the key factors of the Territory's tourist appeal was the extent and frequency of the airline connections, especially with the United States, as well as the fact that the generally richer-than-average clientele was less affected by the economic slowdown.[18]

23. In January 2002, the Government received a $16 million package-advertising programme as a part of Caribbean governments strategy to combat the fall of tourism. The programme is a joint public/private sector initiative, and complements a marketing initiative that the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is already implementing in key marketplaces.[19]

24. In January 2002, the Tourist Board Officials announced that the Territory was experiencing "boom times" with more visitors in December. Major hotels reported between 90 and 100 per cent occupancy levels and tour companies reported increased activities. In March 2002, *Caribbean Travel and Life* magazine granted the Turks and Caicos Islands the award for the Best Undiscovered Destination.[20]

F. Infrastructure

25. Transport and communication facilities are of a good standard, reflecting the Territory's relatively high income and the developing offshore financial sector. There are international airports on Providenciales, Grand Turk, North Caicos and South Caicos, and paved airstrips on Middle Caicos and Salt Cay. American Airlines, Trans World Airlines and Delta Air Lines operate to the United States. British Airways has provided services since June 2001. In season, there are charter flights from several North American cities, including Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia and Toronto. Inter-island services are provided by Turks and Caicos Airways and numerous local charters. Flights are available to the Bahamas, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Jamaica. Grand Turk, Providenciales, South Caicos and Salt Cay have ports. The road network covers about 130 kilometres, with paved roads on Grand Turk, Providenciales and the Caicos Islands.

26. Cable and Wireless, a British telecommunications company, provides domestic and international telephone services. There are 12 cable channels on Grand Turk and 32 on Providenciales, and six radio stations. There are no daily newspapers. The *Free Press* and the *Turks and Caicos News* are published weekly, and the *Times of the Islands*, a magazine aimed at business and tourism, is issued quarterly. All electricity services are operated by private companies, with diesel generators and to United States standards of supply and reliability.[21]

27. In July 2001, the United Kingdom appointed a consultant to look into Britain's Overseas Territories

interest in the Caribbean in connection with the calls to end the monopoly of Cable and Wireless by introducing competition to the market. An agreement between Cable and Wireless and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries has resulted in a 12-to-18-month transition period for any infiltration into the market. In March 2002, the Minister of Immigration, Tourism and Communications announced that a new company will enter the market by mid-year.[22]

28. In the meantime, Cable and Wireless has taken steps to improve its services. In September 2001, it started a massive expansion of the facilities at the Leeward Highway office, including additional operation space, a new Customer Service Centre and the construction of storage facilities. Furthermore, the company donated 46 Dell computers to the government educational institutions around the Territory. This donation is in addition to free Internet access provided by the company to schools at the end of 2000.[23]

29. Another company, WIV Cable TV, will be spending $4 million to improve services to residents in Providenciales. In 2002, it will expand a 750-megahertz fibre optic line which will result in better TV service. A total of 147 miles of cable will be replaced. Ground work for the expansion has already been completed, including design of a new 6,000-square-foot headquarters and mapping of the cable system. The actual infrastructure will take approximately one year to finish and will create 30 additional construction jobs and four permanent positions.[24]

IV. Social conditions

A. General

30. The expansion in the tourism and offshore finance sectors has resulted in favourable economic growth, but activities in that area are concentrated almost totally on one island, Providenciales. Thus, economic opportunities are not equally distributed among the islands. Unemployment varies between 14 and 20 per cent on the other islands, while Providenciales boasts almost full employment. Inter-island migration is common, particularly migration to Grand Turk, where the capital is located. A number of social problems, such as overcrowding, housing shortages and an increase in the number of female-headed households, have resulted from this skewed pattern of development.[25]

31. In September 2001, the Chief Welfare Officer acknowledged at a human rights symposium that there was a need to review and rewrite legislation across the Caribbean, and, in particular, the Turks and Caicos Islands for the safeguarding of family, children and women's rights. In February 2002, the Legislative Council passed amendments to the immigration laws, paving the way for children born out of wedlock to men of the Turks and Caicos Islands to have full rights of citizenship.[26]

B. Labour

32. One of the social problems in the Turks and Caicos Islands that requires serious attention is finding an acceptable balance between providing the Territory's nationals with employment and a more meaningful role in the economy and meeting a growing need for qualified personnel in such industries as tourism and financial services. Regional differences in employment are significant. Unemployment on Providenciales is the result of an imbalance between demand and supply for skills and the unwillingness of many "Belongers" (local islanders) to take certain jobs. This has led to a dependence on immigration and an influx of immigrant workers. Of an estimated population of 24,000, some 5,000 to 6,000 immigrants are from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The geographical location of Turks and Caicos and relative prosperity makes it an attractive destination for job seekers from neighbouring countries.

33. The Government undertakes constant efforts to deal with the problem of illegal immigration, including forced repatriation. It received assistance from the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.[27]

34. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2001/7, para. 53), the Government was revising the rules for granting so-called "Belonger" status and work permits to foreigners. In September 2001, the Executive Council reduced significantly the fees for work permits in the skilled category. The reductions in fees ranged from 50 to 75 per cent and affected more than 10 specific job titles. At the same

time, in February 2002, the Business Licensing Division of the Ministry of Finance enumerated 21 areas of business activities that were reserved for persons with "Belonger" status. Restrictions in business activity range from accountancy to trade and ownership or operation of private schools.[28]

35. With respect to the "Belonger" status, in January 2002, the Government stated that foreigners who are categorized as skilled or professional would no longer have permits renewed beyond the four-year period. For unskilled persons, the ceiling would be three years.[29]

36. In January 2002, the Ministry of Tourism, Communications, Immigration, Labour and Transport announced plans to develop proposals for amendments to Turks and Caicos labour law, concerning the "freedom of association", which would provide recognition of the trade unions and bargaining rights of the employees, as well as provisions on discrimination, registration and work permits.[30]

C. Education

37. Education in the Territory is free and compulsory for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are 14 government-run primary schools and 4 government-run secondary schools. The adult literacy rate is 98 per cent. The pupil-teacher ratio averages 25:1.

38. The quality of education continues to be an issue of concern. In June 2001, the results of the primary school G-SAT test, which determines the eligibility for entering the government high schools, showed that out of 422 students only 181, or 42 per cent, passed the examination. However, primary schools in Providenciales have performed consistently well in the G-SAT despite the 10 per cent increase in the pass mark. (Until 1998 the pass mark was 30 per cent, but was revised upwards to 40 per cent in 1999 and 2000, and to 50 per cent in 2001.)[31]

39. A significant expansion of education facilities has already taken place according to the Chief Minister. Further inputs of over $1.6 million from the United Kingdom, $2.2 million from the Caribbean Development Bank and $500,000 from the territorial Government are to be made to continue the upgrading of the primary and secondary schools and the Community College. In June 2001, the Government formally turned over to the principal the keys to the $5 million Community College campus in the capital city, Grand Turk. The first stage of the project involved refurbishing three buildings of the Old Navy Base into the classroom and administrative facilities. The second phase will include the completion of the dormitory facility for students from across the Islands.[32]

40. In September 2001, the Education Minister announced that scholarships for recent high school graduates could also be used at the British West Indies Collegiate and the Community College.[33]

D. Health

41. Basic health care is available on the islands through a network of primary health care clinics and one hospital, located on Grand Turk, the capital island. The Government has sought to address infrastructural needs, especially on the island of Providenciales, which has a high population growth rate.[34]

42. According to the World Health Organization, the illegal migrant population presents a major challenge for the Territory. These people often live under poor conditions, and there is a recorded increase in the incidence of communicable diseases, especially tuberculosis, among them. This situation also places an additional strain on the Territory's health system.

43. In June 2001, the Government announced a programme which would further improve health service in the Territory. It includes a new $50,000 improvement of the facilities at the hospital in Cockburn Town (the installation of a laparoscopy and mammography unit, a new ultrasound machine, a physical therapy and rehabilitation system and an echocardiography programme). The monies were in addition to the $825,300 Grand Turk Remedial Work project, which started in 2001 and will continue until 2003. Grand Turk will also benefit from a $50,000 Maternal and Child Clinic extension project, the $35,000 mental health programme and $10,000 new nutrition programme. The completion of the Sandy Point Clinic in North Caicos was estimated at $21,450 and an improvement in the clinic in South Caicos at another $25,000. The Government would also spend $811,797 on medical projects in Providenciales and would invest $533,797 in phase one of the Myrtle Rigby Health Clinic expansion, with the last injection of funds totalling $390,000 to be spent by the end of 2002. The Government also plans to spend an additional $3 million over a three-year period on

overseas medical treatment in the event of catastrophe.[35]

E. Crime

44. In January 2002, the head of the Criminal Investigation Department stated that the police in the Turks and Caicos Islands was in control of the crime situation. During the year 2001, there were 1,401 acts of crime, of which 30 per cent have been solved. He stated that in 2000, the detection rate was 35 per cent (435 offences) and in 2001, it was 38 per cent (532 crimes solved). Out of 1,401 crimes investigated, 801 or 57 per cent were burglaries and thefts. A total of 479 persons were arrested and charged with offences. Of this number, 365 were local offenders, including 311 adult males and 20 adult females, 24 juvenile males (compared to 9 juvenile male arrests in 2000) and 1 juvenile female. Among those who were arrested, 123 were aliens (101 adult males, 20 adult females, 1 juvenile male and 1 juvenile female), with the majority arrested for drug offences.[36]

45. Drug trafficking remains a problem in the Territory. According to the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force Mutual Evaluation, the Turks and Caicos Islands has been used as trans-shipment points for drug traffickers, and several seizures of cocaine have been found on Haitian carriers at Providenciales Airport in amounts of up to one kilogram. Illegal drugs are most often brought into the Territory in boats circulating between Haiti and Turks and Caicos. Illegal drugs are also coming from Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas and Colombia. The Police Department reportedly is determined to work with other national agencies, including the Customs and Welfare Departments to apprehend and prosecute offenders.[37]

46. Royal Navy and Royal Air Force attachments to the Police Force have enhanced the Turks and Caicos Islands' ability to combat drug trafficking. The Islands enjoy close cooperation with the United States and Bahamian narcotics agencies under an agreement extended to the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1990, thus allowing for combined United States/Turks and Caicos Islands/Bahamas interdiction operations. In 2000, an agreement on counter-drugs cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom, also on behalf of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean, came into force. The agreement aims at better international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking in the waters of the Caribbean and at closer coordinated operations and air and sea surveillance in the region.[38]

47. Illegal drug convicts are mostly young people between the ages of 15 and 30. During 2000, 118 persons were charged and 80 persons were convicted in this category. In July 2001, the Educational Minister announced that drug use was becoming a norm in high schools. Last year in Clement Howell High School in Providenciales nine students were found smoking marijuana in the bushes adjacent to the school.[39]

F. Environment

48. The Turks and Caicos National Trust is a membership-based voluntary organization working to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Islands.

49. In September 2001, there were numerous reports of sightings of hooded seals in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Out of all those sighted, 5 were found dead on shore, 11 died after rescue or in rehabilitation, 4 have been released and 12 are still alive in rehabilitation.[40]

V. Relations with international organizations and entities

50. The Turks and Caicos Islands were admitted as an associate member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in July 1991. The Territory is also a member of the Caribbean Development Bank and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

51. UNDP support continues under the 1998-2003 country programme, which includes technical support in excess of $780,000. The net contributor country classification places Turks and Caicos in a category that requires full government cost-sharing in UNDP programmes. However, the Territory also benefits from some UNDP regional programmes, such as the regional disaster response and management project and a programme for technical service development. In addition, UNDP continues to concentrate on small business development and employment creation in the Territory, particularly on its less developed islands. UNDP also provides technical support for capacity-building in the public sectors using the United Nations Volunteers.[41]

52. In April 2001, the consultative workshop "The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" was held in Providenciales. A UNICEF representative said that there is an urgent need in the Caribbean to undertake a programme of legal reform with the purpose of modernizing, rationalizing and consolidating laws affecting children. There are some deficiencies in several areas, including matters related to birth status, custody and access to children — especially when parents are separated, child maintenance, procedures to deal with child abuse, and the administration of juvenile justice (see also para. 31 above).[42]

VI. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

53. As cited in resolutions of the General Assembly on the Turks and Caicos Islands (see General Assembly resolution 54/90 B, part X), the representatives of the Turks and Caicos Islands stated in 1997 that there was a lack of adequate visible development of the process of self-determination in the Territory. They stated that there was the political will on the part of the territorial leaders for a more advanced Constitution, which would enable an orderly transfer of power to the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. They stated that the administering Power should accelerate the process of equipping and preparing the people of the Territory to evaluate properly the available options for self-determination and, with that in view, emphasized that the advancement of the political, economic, social and educational institutions in the Territory was of paramount importance (see A/AC.109/2089, para. 29).

B. Position of the administering Power

54. On 8 October 2001, the representative of the United Kingdom made a statement before the Fourth Committee (see A/C.4/56/SR.3), in which she welcomed the opportunity to present her Government's position as administering Power and to report on further progress made towards the modernization and development of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories.

55. The United Kingdom representative said that the third meeting of the Overseas Territories Consultative Committee had been held in London in September 2001. The meeting had been hosted by Baroness Amos, who was appointed Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories in June 2001. The Consultative Committee provided a forum for structured political dialogue and exchange of views between the elected representatives of the Overseas Territories and Her Majesty's Government. The meeting was an opportunity to continue dialogue on the management of public affairs and future development of the Overseas Territories, and enabled Ministers and Overseas Territories governments to consult on matters such as the process of constitutional review and human rights issues arising from the United Kingdom's international commitments.

56. The representative of the United Kingdom said that the United Kingdom's partnership with Overseas Territories continued to evolve and progress. On 21 June, the Government had introduced to Parliament the British Overseas Territories bill, which would grant British citizenship, with right to abode in the United Kingdom, to citizens from 13 of the United Kingdom's 14 Overseas Territories in fulfilment of a commitment made in the 1999 White Paper on the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories. The bill would also formally change the nomenclature from dependent to overseas Territory to reflect more accurately the nature of the relationship. The United Kingdom and most overseas Territories adopted an Environment Charter on 26 September, which set out 10 guiding principles expressing the key environmental commitments that the international community has adopted. The guiding principles were followed by specific commitments on the part of the United Kingdom and Overseas Territories' governments, indicating how they would work in partnership for the benefit of the environment. It was a good example, the representative of the United Kingdom said, of how progress could be made by working together in an area of mutual interest, which was critical to the future prosperity, well-being and even survival of many of the Overseas Territories and their communities.

57. The representative of the United Kingdom pointed out that, as the record showed, for the United Kingdom, the wishes of the peoples concerned, exercised in accordance with the other principles set out in the United Nations Charter and in other international treaties, are of paramount importance.

The relationship of the United Kingdom with the Territories continued to be based on the following fundamental principles: self-determination; mutual obligations; freedom for the Territories to run their affairs to the greatest degree possible; and a firm commitment from the United Kingdom to help the Territories economically and to assist them in emergencies. The representative of the United Kingdom said that she was sure the Special Committee recognized the basic commonality of approach between the British Government and the Committee.

58. Nevertheless, she stated, it was a pity that while there was so much in common in their approaches, that was not always properly reflected in all relevant resolutions, in particular of the Special Committee on decolonization. The United Kingdom welcomed the fact that the annual "Omnibus" resolution stated that "... in the decolonization process there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination". The United Kingdom therefore regretted that the Special Committee continued only to apply that principle selectively. That principle was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

59. The United Kingdom, she stated, would continue to work to improve its cooperation with the Special Committee. A representative of the United Kingdom had attended the Regional Seminar of the Special Committee held in Havana in 2001.

60. The United Kingdom welcomed the efforts made by the Special Committee begun under the constructive leadership of Ambassador Don'gi, to pursue informal dialogue with the administering Powers with a view to possible future removal of the Territories from the Committee's list. Careful preparations would be necessary before the United Kingdom could expect substantive progress to be made, but the United Kingdom remained ready to cooperate with the Committee in these efforts.

C. Consideration by the General Assembly

61. On 10 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/72, a consolidated resolution on 11 Non-Self-Governing Territories, section X of which is specifically devoted to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Notes

[1] The information contained in the present paper has been derived from published reports and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations.

[2] http://www.fco.gov.uk.

[3] *Press Release* "Baroness Amos and Citizenship", *St. Helena Herald*, 22 March 2002.

[4] Oxford Analytica, 4 February 2002; *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 7-14 February 2002.

[5] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 15 September 2001.

[6] Official web site of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (www.oecd.org//dac/), Turks and Caicos Islands government budget, 2000-2003.

[7] *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 7-14 February 2002.

[8] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile: Turks and Caicos Islands, 2000/2001*.

[9] Oxford Analytica, 4 February 2002.

[10] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 8-14 April 2001.

[11] NewsEdge, 8 March 2002.

[12] Ibid., 20 January, 13 February, 31 March 2002.

[13] See note 7.

[14] TCI Island Profile (www.tcinvest.tc/tc).

[15] www.tcinvest.tc.

[16] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile: Turks and Caicos Islands, 2000/2001*.

[17] Ibid.

[18] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 15 September 2001; Oxford Analytica Latin America Brief, 4 February 2002.

[19] *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 31 January 2002, ibid., 17 January 2002.

[20] Ibid., 3 January, 7 March 2002.

[21] See note 16.

[22] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 7 July 2001, 7 March 2002.

[23] Ibid., 1 September 2001.

[24] Ibid., 7 July 2001.

[25] *1998 Caribbean Basin Profile*.

[26] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 22 September 2001,

14 February 2002, "Legislature providing citizenship to children born out of wedlock to local women already exists".

[27] Ibid., 17-23 March 2001.

[28] *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 21 February 2002.

[29] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 15 September 2001; *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 17 January 2002.

[30] *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 3 January 2002.

[31] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 16 June 2001.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 8 September 2001.

[34] See note 25.

[35] See note 32.

[36] *Turks and Caicos Free Press*, 31 January 2002.

[37] http://www.oecd.org//fatf/ctry-orgpages/cctry-tc_en.htm.

[38] Official web site of the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk/news.newstext.asap?4330). *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, October 1998.

[39] *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*, 14 July 2001.

[40] Ibid., 22 September 2001.

[41] Ibid., 13-26 January 2001.

[42] Ibid., 28 April 2001.